Stony the Road We Trod Rachael Rack, Robert McHugh, Edintzon Santos

Unit: Civil Rights Duration: around 9 class days Level: High School

Essential Questions: What changes in race relations occurred in post-war America? What were the catalysts for these changes? How did the 1950s and 60s lead to a shift in the relationship between the federal government and its citizens? What do the stories and personal histories of ordinary Americans tell us about the relationship t the broader Civil Rights Movement?

Objectives:

Students should be able to

1. Identify and explain the significance of the key episodes in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s
2. Analyze the way the events of the CVM altered the role of the federal government in the lives of ordinary Americans
3. Investigate the lives of ordinary civil rights foot soldiers and place their stories in the larger context of the CVM

Activities:

Day 1: Students will have already read the chapter in the textbook on the Civil Rights Movement. The teacher starts by recounting the story of Emmett Till using the words of his mother.

The teacher will make a large outline on butcher paper including the following events: Brown v. Board of Education, Montgomery bus boycott, Little Rock, Freedom Riders/SNCC, Birmingham Children’s March, Birmingham/ 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, Freedom Summer, and Selma.

The teacher will divide the class into pairs. Each of the 16 pairs will be responsible for researching one of the following elements: either the 1)personal oral histories of the foot soldiers of their assigned place/event, or 2)the role/response of the Federal Government.

Day one homework: Students will read the part of *My Soul is Rested* (the collection of oral histories) that relates to their assigned event.

Day 2: Students will meet in the computer lab to work in groups. The groups assigned to look at oral histories will use the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute’s web site and look at the archives of video interviews of people from the Civil Rights movement. As a group, they will try to find a few that they would like to use in their presentations. The teacher would also have the audio recordings from the Stony conference that could be shared with students.

Students who are looking at the Federal Government’s response could use newspaper web sites, presidential library websites, or the Library of Congress.

Day 3: Students continue researching together.

Day 4: Students begin working on a ten minute presentation where they report what they have learned from these oral histories. In their presentation, they might include shorter video clips and excerpts from *My Soul is Rested*. Students researching the response of the Federal government will also give a 10 minute presentation, focusing on how the government did or did not respond to the situation and how the role of the federal government in t he Civil Rights Movement changes over time.

Days 5-8: Students will give their presentations, starting in chronological order. As the pairs give their presentations, students and the teacher will fill in their timelines with specific information learned from the presentations about the events and the government’s response.

Day 9: The teacher leads a session for students to discuss conclusions, going back to the opening questions:

1. To what extent was life for African-Americans fundamentally different in 1966 compared to 1953? What new civil/constitutional rights did they possess? What issues did the modern Civil Rights Movement/government fail to address?